

Study on the relationship between love attitudes and marital satisfaction among married women

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the relation between love attitudes with marital satisfaction in women of Tehran. The statistical sample was 150 of married women among 22 regions of Tehran who were selected by Multi-stage cluster sampling. Parakash Marital Satisfaction (1985) and Love Attitude Scale–short form (LAS-SF) (1986) were used to collect data. Pearson correlation and multivariable regression used to analysis data. The result showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between Eros, Storge, Pragma, Agape of love attitudes with marital satisfaction, while Ludus had a negative and significant relationship with marital satisfaction. Stepwise Regression analyses showed that Eros, Pragma, Ludus and Storge of love attitudes were able to predict marital satisfaction.

Keywords: marital satisfaction, love attitude, women.

Introduction

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman who make a permanent and exclusive commitment to each other of the type that is naturally fulfilled by bearing and rearing children together.

In fact, successful marriage and marital relation can meet many physical and mental needs in a secure environment and has significant effect on mental health of individuals (Noranipour et.al, 2007). Marital relationship has positive and negative aspects like other relation in life. The main determinant in marriage is quality and type of relations between husband and wife (Gottman, 2002). Various researches have pointed out this issue that successful marriage creates happier and healthier individuals (Dannelly, 1993). Nicolas et.al (2000) believes that marital satisfaction is one of common concepts for showing degree of happiness and solidarity of marital relationship. Also Edalati and Redzuan (2010) define marital satisfaction as a total evaluation of current marital relationship. Winch (2002) argues that marital satisfaction is conformity between current situations with expected situation between couples. Based on this definition marital satisfaction exists when current situation in marital relationship is conformed to expected situation.

Satisfaction of marital is one of the main concepts in family sociology and psychology. This concept refers to amount of satisfaction of marital life and its range encompasses similar concepts to most internal and hidden perceptions and feelings of individual regarding relationship with spouse (Khaniki, 2009); therefore, it is expected that various variables were effective in this subject.

Harmony of needs, meeting emotional needs, having skills related to understanding and love methods and meeting sexual needs increases their satisfaction of shared life and its continuation.

One of important factors in achieving marital satisfaction is love; love is the most important factor in choosing spouse because despite its romantic and sexual aspects, it includes individuals' talent for accepting commitment to others (Abdolmaleki, 2008). According to Risavy (1995) the most common reason for marriage and divorce is love or lack of it. Beck (1994) believes that love is an important and effective element in successful marriage. Love as an important factor cause marital satisfaction and stability of marital life (Ghomrani, 2005). Results obtained from researches (Divon & Divon, 1991) show that love has a solid relationship with marital satisfaction and is one of important factors in reaching marital satisfaction. In line by mentioned researches Moshak (2010) has concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between love and its styles (intimacy, concupiscence and commitment) with marital satisfaction in male and female students.

Crawford and colleagues (2003) concluded that love and equality are best predictors for relationship alterations and increase commitment in romantic relationship. In other words, commitment maintains romantic relationship. Overbeack, Kemp and Ingles (2007) stated in a research that there is a positive relationship between love components with continuing romantic relationship.

As it was mentioned one of the important determinants for marital satisfaction is love and its quality. Love and its quality between couples have been studied in many researches. Some findings have shown that Love has implications for the health and well-being and may activate regions related to emotion, attention, motivation and memory and decrease distress (Esch & Stefano, 2005).

Psychologists introduce love as an essential and positive emotion but there is no consensus about concept of love and its types. Cultural psychologists are kind of those who concerned about concept of love. Theories presented about love give different definitions for love and classify it to various classifications, but none of them answer this question that why choices of individuals are often same, although they may encounter failure? Why relations of couples continue, despite others see their relations painful and unbearable, both of them are satisfied; while relations of a couple which seem ideal with happiness and health did not continue and everyone goes to find suitable person. Sternberg (1994) in response to these questions and criticizing three-dimensional of his theory presented the theory "love as a story" or John Lee discuss about love styles and explained that individuals in each stage of life can have dominant love style that each of these styles has certain characteristics which has its own needs and expectations. Now this question arises that if each attitude toward love has specific aspect, what kind of love style can predict marital satisfaction?

Lee (1973) resembled love attitudes and styles to color that secondary colors comprises from combination of basic colors. This is same for love. He introduces love cycle which there is only three colors: yellow, red and blue and therefore, there is three styles of love. Love divides into primary and secondary spectrum. Primary love styles are:

- Eros: strong physical and emotional appeal;
- Ludus: playing love drama
- Storge: love based on friendship

Secondary love which is comprised with combination of three primary loves divides into three types:

- pragma (Rational love): is a combination of dramatic love and friendly love styles.

These individuals evaluate reasonably; for example they want desired traits which good marriage needs and select their beloved according to their criteria.

- Mania: is a combination of joyful love and dramatic love and requires exclusion, obsession, anxiety and joyful behavior.

- Agape (Devoting love) is a combination Mania and Eros which is altruistic and strong. Devoting love is total devotion.

Some researches have done about different aspects of love attitudes that are listed below:

Inman-Amos et.al (1994) in a study concluded that love score in each love attitude has high and positive correlation with the same love attitude in spouse. In fact, it is observed that there is significant and positive correlation between Eros with Eros and Ludus with Ludus. The result about marital satisfaction of parents showed that there is a relationship between marital satisfaction and love attitude, by increasing in Eros and decreasing in Ludus attitudes marital satisfaction increased. Sokolski and Hendrick (1999) found that there is positive relationship correlation between interpersonal variables of enthusiastic love, friendly love and altruistic love with marital satisfaction. Behrozi and Taghipour (2010) in a study concluded that there is significant relationship between Eros, Ludus, Storg, pragma, Mania and Agape love styles with marital satisfaction. Contreras., et al (1996) found the strongest predictor of relationship satisfaction was passionate love (Eros), with altruistic love (Agape) also a positive predictor of satisfaction for women. Multiple correlation coefficients for personality characteristics and love styles with marital satisfaction indicated that best predictor for marital satisfaction is Eros love and extraversion personality characteristics. Fricker and Moore (2002) in their study concluded that marital satisfaction has direct and positive relationship with Eros and direct and negative relationship with ludus. Amanuelahi and colleagues (2012) showed that Eros, Agape, Storge and Pragma has a positive significant relationship with marital satisfaction while Ludus and Mania love style indicated negative significant relationship with marital satisfaction.

In today's world, There are various researches about marital satisfaction but they less concentrated on the role of love attitudes with marital satisfaction. This study seeks to answer the scientific question "whether love attitudes components are associated with marital satisfaction?"

Hypotheses

There is a relationship between Eros with marital satisfaction.

There is a relationship between Ludus and marital satisfaction.

There is a relationship between Storge and marital satisfaction.

There is a relationship between Pragma and marital satisfaction.

There is a relationship between Mania and marital satisfaction.

There is a relationship between Agape and marital satisfaction.

Material and methods

Statistical society and sampling methods

The study population is consisted of all married women in 22 regions of Tehran. The sample includes 150 married women who were selected by multi-stage cluster random procedure. First two regions were selected randomly then one area in each region was selected randomly and questionnaires were given to all married women.

Instruments

Parakash Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (1985) was designed in India which includes 25 questions. Psychometric properties in Iran shows that Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of questioner after using four method is 0.81 in average which indicate high and proper reliability. After reviewing the three types of validity (content, criterion, construct), it could be argued that there is appropriate validity as well.

Love Attitude Scale Questionnaire Short Form (LAS-SF) was developed in 1986 by Hendrick and Hendrick. This questionnaire evaluates six styles of romantic relationship. This questionnaire evaluates the attitudes and is also applicable on those who have never had a romantic relationship. The LAS consists of six sub-scales, each consisting of four items which describe particular beliefs in a relationship. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is between 0.75 and 0.88. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was between 0.53 and 0.79.

Results

Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regressions were used to test the hypotheses. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS.

Statistical characteristics of the study variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of the Research Variables (n =150)

Variable	Mean (X)	Standard deviation (S)
Marital satisfaction	35.83	10.18
Eros	16.62	2.81
Ludus	11.66	2.64
Storge	14.98	3.85
Pragma	14.62	3.99
Mania	15.33	3.03
Agape	12.98	4.31

As table show, mean score of marital satisfaction is 35.83 and among variables related to love attitudes, Eros and Ludus have highest and lowest mean with 16.62 and 11.66, respectively.

Table 2. Correlation coefficients between love attitudes with marital satisfaction

Predicting variables	Marital satisfaction	P
Eros	0.66	0.00
Ludus	-0.18	0.01
Storge	0.22	0.00
Pragma	0.32	0.00
Mania	-0.005	0.92
Agape	0.21	0.00

As table 2 shows correlation coefficient of Eros, Ludus, Storg, pragma and agape in love attitudes and marital satisfaction is significant in $p < 0.01$. It indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between Eros, Storg, pragma and agape with marital satisfaction which means an increase in those attitudes, would increase score of marital satisfaction, while there is negative and significant relationship between Ludus and marital satisfaction.

Stepwise regression was used to determine best predictor for marital satisfaction. Four variable Eros, pragma, ludus and Storg entered in to the model which obtained results are presented in table 3.

Based on table 3, the relationship between Eros, Ludus, pragma and Storg with marital satisfaction is significant ($F(4,145) = 35.89, p < 0.01$). Eros is the most powerful predictor variable in model and can explain 43% variance in criterion variable (marital satisfaction) in second step,

Pragma added to model and these two items (Eros, Pragma) are responsible for 46% variance in marital satisfaction. In third step, Ludus was added to model and these three items are responsible for 48% variance in marital satisfaction. Finally, by adding Storge to study, these four variables can explain 50% variance in marital satisfaction.

Table3. Summary Analysis of Step-by-Step Regression Analysis of the predictors and criterion

Step	Predicting variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R	F	P
1	Eros	0.656	0.43	0.43	112.08	0.000
2	Eros, Pragma	0.680	0.46	0.46	63.36	0.000
3	Eros, pragma, Ludus	0.695	0.48	0.47	45.49	0.000
4	Eros, pragma, Ludus, Storge	0.705	0.50	0.49	35.89	0.000

Table 4. Coefficients of Step-by-Step Regression Analysis

step	Component	Non-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		Non-standard B	Standard Error	standard Beta	t	p
4	Fixed number	2.16	5.09		0.42	0.672
	Eros	2.47	0.24	0.68	10.04	0.000
	Pragma	0.40	0.16	-0.16	2.57	0.010
	Ludus	-0.66	0.23	-0.17	-2.81	0.006
	Storge	-0.36	0.18	-0.14	-2.04	0.043

According to above table, in fourth step, Eros ($B=2.47$, $t=10.47$, $P<0.001$), Pragma ($B=0.40$, $t=2.57$, $p<0.01$), Ludus ($B=-0.66$, $t=-2.81$, $P<0.01$), Storge ($B=-0.36$, $t=-2.04$, $P<0.05$), have a significant role in predicting marital satisfaction. Eros by $B=0.68$ has highest share in predicting marital satisfaction.

Conclusions

Purpose of this study was to investigating the relationship between love attitudes and marital satisfaction of married women of Tehran which showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between Eros, Storge, pragma and Agape with marital satisfaction while there is a negative and meaningful relationship between ludus and marital satisfaction.

As it is seen there is a positive and strong relationship between Eros attitudes with marital satisfaction ($r=0.66$, $p<0.000$). Eros entered into the regression model in first step and explained approximately 43 percent of the variance of marital satisfaction. It should be mention that Eros is enthusiastic love which main characteristic is physical appeal with strong emotion. Intimacy and strong emotional aspect of this style creates a kind of warmth, love and affection. On the other hand, Strong physical attraction along with strong sexual attraction can work as a motivational factor and will increase marital satisfaction. This result is consistent with Hendrick et.al (1994), Contreras., et al (1996) , Sokolski and Hendrick (1999), Fricker and Moore (2002) ,Behrozi and Taghipour (2010), Amanuelahi and colleagues (2012) studies.

In explaining positive relationship between Storge love and marital satisfaction it should be noted that the main feature based on friendship. These individuals believe that their love has stem from long term friendship and gradually became love. Their love is not a secret and mystery but it is bases on deep knowledge and friendship. In fact, closeness and understanding in this relationship can help them to solve problems and conflicts in mutual life. This attitude is like friendly love of Sternberg. The result is in line with Behrozi and Taghipour (2010) , Amanuelahi and colleagues (2012).

To explain negative relationship between ludus with marital satisfaction it should be noted that main feature of this love which is called dramatic love, is playing love drama. Those with this attitude see love as a game for achieving mutual pleasure but they did not think this game should necessarily terminated to specific results. Appearance has no role in these love attitudes, these individuals often are involved in the relationship by more than one simultaneously and consider just their sexual needs in these relationships. They believe that if their spouses become aware of their relationships and plans, they will be hurt. Although commitment did not guarantee success of marital life but it is an important factor for marriage continuity. Ackr and Davis (1992) stated in their research that high level of commitment is the strong predictor of romantic relation. This result is consistent with results of Behrozi and Taghipour (2010) , Fricker and Moor (2002) and Hendricks et.al (1994).

The relationship between Mania love style which is intense, obsessive and anxious wasn't meaningful with marital satisfaction in this research, The result isn't in line with Behrozi and Taghipour (2010) , Amanuelahi and colleagues (2012).

About positive relationship between Pragma and marital satisfaction it can be said that Pragma is a rational love, which can reduce emotional base choices. The result is consisted with Behrozi and Taghipour (2010) ,Amanuelahi and colleagues (2012).

In explaining positive relationship between Agape and marital satisfaction we should say that agape is devoting love which is altruistic, friendly and strong. These lovers see their beloved as a saint, this style of love is non-demanding style of love. They are often willing to sacrifice their own needs for their partner's needs, The result of this study is in line with Contreras et al.,(1996) , Behrozi and Taghipour (2010) research.

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